

Design Guidelines for Advertisements and Signs

This leaflet provides guidance on the location and design of signs, particularly in historic areas. It expands upon the policies contained in the Guildford Borough Local Plan and is complemented by the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Shopfront Design and Security in Historic Areas'. The Council aims to encourage high standards of design generally in the built environment, and advertisements and signs can have a major impact on the quality of our town and villages.

The purpose of advertising is to attract attention and, consequently, it is a form of development, which has a particularly strong effect on the character of an area. This can be harmful or beneficial - advertising can bring added vitality and interest to a shopping street, but if it is badly sited, inappropriately coloured, oversized, or there is a proliferation of signs, it can undermine the character of an area. As well as creating clutter and mess, too many signs are self-defeating as they reduce the impact of the message being conveyed.



Is Planning Permission Needed?

The display of advertisements and signs is controlled by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. These Regulations control all types of advertisements, whether illuminated or not.



Please note that the law relating to advertisements is highly complicated. You are strongly advised to check with the Development Group of the Borough Council to confirm whether Advertisement Consent is required before displaying an advertisement or sign on your property.

Additional controls apply if you wish to display an advertisement on a listed building. Any sign or advertisement fixed to a listed building will require Listed Building Consent.

It is an offence to display an advertisement without first obtaining the necessary consent for it. Under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, local planning authorities have the power to bring prosecution in the Magistrates Court against anyone who displays an advertisement illegally, or knowingly permits someone else to do so.

General Design Considerations

The design, colour, materials and positioning of all advertisements and signs should respect the character and style of the existing building and be appropriate within the street scene.

Advertisements and signs should not obscure architectural features such as windows, cornices, string courses, pilasters and mouldings.

Where advertisements are displayed above the fascia level their location and scale should not detract from the character or appearance of the building or street scene.

Signs on gable ends or flank walls will generally be resisted in order to protect the character of the shopping streets and individual buildings from unnecessarily dominant displays.



Advertisements should avoid the use of particularly glossy materials. Within conservation areas and on listed buildings, painted timber or individually applied lettering is generally the most appropriate material.

Multiple traders may need to adapt their particular 'house-style' in order to respect the character of individual shopping streets.



The number of signs and size of lettering, particularly in conservation areas and other environmentally sensitive areas, should be kept to a minimum to avoid clutter.

The colour of advertisements and signs should be in harmony with the rest of the streetscene and the building on which they are located. Bright, garish colours are not normally appropriate, particularly on listed buildings and in Conservation Areas.

Illuminated Signs

Illuminated signs of any description will not normally be appropriate in the cobbled part of Guildford High Street or on listed buildings.

In conservation areas and other environmentally sensitive areas, the use of external illumination or individually illuminated applied lettering may be acceptable in certain circumstances, subject to regard being given to the amenities of occupants of adjoining properties. Preference may be given to premises which trade at night e.g. pubs, restaurants, night clubs etc.

Open neon tubing and intermittent illumination should be avoided.

Illuminated signs should present a neat appearance during the daytime, with switch gear and wiring properly concealed.

The intensity of illumination should not cause glare, especially in areas where they could create a highway hazard.

Projecting and Hanging Signs

Projecting and hanging signs will not normally be considered appropriate in the cobbled part of the High Street.



There should be no more than one projecting or hanging sign per building. Where a building has been subdivided into separate uses, care will need to be taken that a proliferation of signs does not detract from its character.

Projecting and hanging signs should normally be positioned at or above fascia level and should not obscure architectural or historic features.

Care should be taken to hang signs in a position, which would not obscure neighbouring fascias.

Bracket design should be simple, and where an original bracket survives it should be reused. Traditional designs are often most appropriate on listed buildings and in conservation areas. Sometimes, well designed one off signs can add vitality to the street.

Where appropriate, symbols and traditional treatments will be encouraged. Materials should normally be timber, although metallic or enamel may be appropriate depending on the character of the building and its setting.

Projecting box signs are not considered appropriate on listed buildings or in conservation areas.

Fascias

Fascias should respect the scale and proportion of the existing building, and be of appropriate materials and colours.

The fascia should only be used for identification of the shop, and where necessary its trade or profession. It should not be used for advertising trade goods.



The style, form and size of fascia lettering is an important consideration and should be appropriate to the building and the shopfront.

Advice on the design of fascias is included in a separate guide relating to shopfronts.



Contact details

Planning Officers

01483 444623

Applications in the West of the Borough

01483 444622

Applications in the East of the Borough

Design and Conservation Officers
Advice on Conservation Areas and
Listed Buildings

01483 444664

A-Boards

The unauthorised positioning of A-Boards in the highway is considered to be hazardous to highway users and the Council will therefore take action to remove any such signs.

Flags and Banners

Advertisement Consent and Planning Permission may be required for banners and flags, which would normally be resisted within sensitive locations. Listed Building Consent may also be required if fixed to a Listed Building.

The Removal of Existing Signs

The removal of inappropriate and unsightly old signs, brackets, wiring, electrical fittings and pipework can effect a considerable improvement in the appearance of a building. The removal of such features from a listed building may require consent.

In most cases, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions and advertisements to ensure that signs are maintained in a tidy condition.